

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

EUR-12 ACDA-05 IO-10 NRC-05 /120 W
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INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : ENRG EMIN BR

SUBJECT : NEW URANIUM DISCOVERIES

1. SUMMARY: BECAUSE BOTH COMMODITIES MINERALS ARE IN SHORT DOMESTIC SUPPLY, OIL AND URANIUM HAVE LONG HAD A WAY OF CAPTURING THE BRAZILIAN IMAGINATION - AND HEADLINES. LATELY URANIUM HAS BEEN FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE PRESS, ESPECIALLY THE REPORTED DISCOVERY OF ESTIMATED RESERVES OF 50,000 TONS OF YELLOW-CAKE IN TWO DEPOSITS IN THE STATE OF GOIAS. CLARIFYING THE PRESS REPORTS, THE GOB HAS STATED THAT THE DEPOSITS ARE ESTIMATED TO CONTAIN A COMBINED TOTAL OF 1,500 TONS, EQUIVALENT TO ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S PREVIOUSLY ESTIMATED RESERVES. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF BRAZIL'S NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH WEST GERMANY, THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN STRUCK WITH URANIUM FEVER. VIRTUALLY OVERNIGHT, AS THE PRESS WOULD HAVE HAVE IT, RESERVES OF U-308 (YELLOW-CAKE) HAVE SHOT UP FROM 11,000 METRIC TONS TO A "POTENTIAL" OF
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500,000 TONS. IN TERMS REMINISCENT OF THE TREATMENT

GIVEN TO PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN BRAZIL, HARDLY A DAY HAS GONE BY WITHOUT THE PRESS HIGHLIGHTING A URANIUM STORY. DISCOVERIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN A VARIETY OF LOCATIONS, MOSTLY IN THE AMAZON REGION, NOTABLY RORAIMA. LAST WEEK THE PRESS HIGHLIGHTED TWO NEW DISCOVERIES (IN FACT THEY WERE MADE A YEAR AGO) IN THE STATE OF GOIAS. DEPENDING ON THE NEWSPAPER IN QUESTION AND ITS USUALLY UNIDENTIFIED "OFFICIAL SOURCE", ANYWHERE FROM 40 TO HUNDREDS OF DEPOSITS ARE LOCATED IN GOIAS. ACCORDING TO NUCLEBRAS "TECHNICIANS", REPORTED RIO'S 'O GLOBO', RESERVES AT THB TWO MAIN GOIAS DEPOSITS ALONE ARE ESTIMATED AT 50,000 TONS. ON JOURNAL (SAO PAULO'S 'GAZETA MERCANTIL') EVEN IMPLIED THAT THE DISCOVERIES STEM FROM THE GOB-FRG NUCLEAR AGREEMENT.

3. APPARENTLY TO PREVENT THINGS FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND, THE OFFICE OF MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY SHIGEAKI UEKI RELEASED A STATEMENT ON AUGUST 28 CLARIFYING THE PRESS REPORTS ON GOIAS. ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT EVIDENCE OF URANIUM MINERALIZATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED IN TWO AREAS OF GOIAS. IN THE FIRST AREA, LOCATED NEAR CAMPOS BELOS (400 KILOMETERS NORTH OF BRASILIA), THE MINERALIZATION IS BELIEVED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH SCHISTS AND GRANITIC ROCKS OF PRECAMBRIAN AGE. FROM A LIMITED PROGRAM OF PITTING, TRENCHING AND SHALLOW DRILLING, VISIBLE MINERALIZATION WAS TRACED FOR A DISTANCE OF 300 METERS ALONG THE STRIKE WITH CONTINUITY TO A DEPTH OF 40 METERS. ANALYTICAL VALUES OBTAINED RANGE FROM 0.012 TO 5.0 PERCENT URANIUM OXIDE, WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT AS YET TO DETERMINE AN AVERAGE GRADE FOR THE OCCURRENCE. NEVERTHELESS, AN ESTIMATE OF RESERVES IS INDICATED TO BE IN THE ORDER OF 1,000 TONS U-308. IN THE SECOND AREA, LOCATED NEAR AMORINOPOLIS (300 KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF BRASILIA), MINERALIZATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH SEDIMENTS OF DEVONIAN AGE. ANOMALOUS VALUES RANGING FROM 0.02 TO 0.5 PERCENT U-308 HAVE BEEN TRACED ALONG STRIKE FOR A DISTANCE OF 1,300 METERS. IN THE AREA STUDIED, A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF RESERVES IS 500 TONS U-308. HOWEVER, THE POTENTIAL IS CONSIDERED VERY PROMISING BECAUSE OF THE CONSIDERABLE EXTENT OF THESE SEDIMENTS. A MORE PRECISE ESTIMATE OF MEASURED RESERVES WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLY AFTER SEVERAL MORE MONTHS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF DETAILED EVALUATION. THE MINISTRY'S STATEMENT REAFFIRMED THAT THE REST OF THE COUNTRY'S RESERVES ARE ESTIMATED AT 11,000 TONS.

4. A FOREIGN GEOLOGIST WORKING WITH NUCLEBRAS INFORMED MINERALS OFFICER ON AUGUST 29 THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM INSPECTING THE GOIAS DEPOSITS. HE SAID THE URANIUM SEDIMENTS CONTAINED IN THE FEW SAMPLES TESTED SO FAR ARE

INTERESTING, BUT THEN SO ARE MANY OTHERS FROM ALL OVER
BRAZIL. IN ANY EVENT, A LOT MORE WORK WILL BE NEEDED ON THE
TWO GOIAS DEPOSITS TO CONFIRM THE RESULTS TO DATE AND TO
ACTUALLY PROVE THE ESTIMATED RESERVES.

5. COMMENT: SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT WITH
GERMANY AND THE RENEWED INTEREST AND PUBLIC ATTENTION
GIVEN TO BRAZIL'S URANIUM, THE RESERVE FIGURE OF 500,000
TONS OF U-308 MYSTERIOUSLY SURFACED. IN A SPEECH LAST
WEEK TO BRAZIL'S NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE, THE PRESIDENT OF
NUCLEBRAS, DR PAULO NOGUEIRA BATISTA, WAS QUOTED AS
SAYING, "IT STILL IS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE EXPLOR-
ATION TO CONFIRM WHETHER BRAZIL'S URANIUM POTENTIAL IS
500,000 TONS."
JOHNSON

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